

SPORTS AS THE EXPERTS SEE THEM

Wrestling Game Is Being Revived

WHAT has happened to the old wrestling game? "Why the revived interest?" This is a question baseball and football fans are asking. It is one that might well be asked considering the revival of the sport in cities all over America.

Following are six reasons for revival of the mat game:

Joe Stecher.—The appearance of this wonderful grappler, who hasn't been

pronounced him one of the cleanest, squarrest athletes ever turned out from the ranks of the amateurs.

Waino Ketonen.—Wonderful wrestler from Finland, holder of the middleweight championship. Ketonen doesn't care how tough his opponents are or what their reputations for ability on the mat. He will tackle them all and take a chance on winning. His only defeat in America was at the hands of Mike Yokel. Ketonen later won the championship in a sensational match.

Johnny Blittler.—Lightweight champion, whose home is at Toledo. A wonderful grappler at his weight and generally pronounced the best gladiator of the mat in the world at 130 pounds. Blittler's eagerness to hold his title and his ability to win with Gotsch's toe hold insures the squareness of all the matches in which he contests.

To these must be added Ben Reuben, Joe Smith, Anton Stecher and other square grapplers who have brought in their influence to boost the mat game.

The appearance of new mat promoters and managers trying to build up the game is also a big factor in boosting the wrestling game. Gene Melady, the Omaha promoter, is packing the largest buildings in that city and Council Bluffs, across the river, every time he stages bouts. Melady has placed a premium upon squareness by a clause that takes away the receipts and gives them to charity if any crookedness is detected.

Arbiter Decides Batter Is Entitled To Half Run

RUBE MARSHALL, who would be billed in vaudeville as an eccentric comedian, but who is now endeavoring to earn money by the more serious method of pitching winning ball for the Tigers, is chock full of stories.

One of his latest has to do with a ball game in which the umpire was forced to render a decision that rivaled the judgment of Solomon.

Two teams were playing a ball game down in Kentucky," says Marshall, "and they came up to the last half of the ninth inning with the score tied, each having made two runs. With two men out, the hitter broke the only bat in the park on a foul ball, and they had to go out and get an axe handle to substitute for the ash. On the next pitch the leading slugger of the town hit this pill right on the nose with the emergency bat. He happened to have the sharp edge turned toward the glove, and he split it right square in two.

"One half went over the fence and the other dropped inside the park. The demon larriper made the circuit of the bases, and his comrades claimed that the winning run had scored. Naturally the other side put up a roar and the umpire stood a good chance of getting mobbed, no matter which way he decided. As there were plenty of weapons in plain sight, it behooved him to think carefully before he ruled.

"After pondering over the matter for some time, while the fans began to pack their artillery and get ready to go into action, the judge of play rendered the verdict that the home club had won by a score of 2½ to 2, giving the batter half a run for knocking the fragment of ball over the fence. The visitors couldn't find anything in the rule book to offer in rebuttal, and they had to accept this decision, so both sides repaired to a convenient still and conducted themselves as Kentucky gentlemen usually do in their moments of social relaxation."

"I claim that Mr. Umpire used his head in a pinch and that Carnegie ought to give him a hero medal for saving his own life."

KAUFF GREATEST PLAYER EVER—JOE TINKER

BENNIE KAUFF, formerly of the late Federal league and now with the Giants, has been heard to say on numerous occasions that Bennie Kauff was, is and always would be the greatest ball player in the world.

For which expressed hatred of himself Benjamin has been put down as a very swell headed guy.

But the most epistolical of Ben's confessions are completely snowed under by compliments which Joe Tinker, an-



Photo by American Press Association. BENNY KAUFF.

other member of the late Federal league, pays to the new Giant outfielder.

"Bennie Kauff is as far ahead of Ty Cobb or any other ball player as Cobb has been ahead of his rivals all these years," said Manager Tinker, as he left the diamond recently after seeing his Cuba take a beating from Cleveland.

"He hasn't overrated himself a bit. He can hit a ball just as far as he wants and is a great all around player. He will be the sensation of baseball from now on, take my tip."

TEN SECOND MEN IN BASEBALL. ONE often hears of "ten second" men in baseball, but it is doubtful if there is a sprinter in the game who can make a hundred yards in that time. At the camp of the Reds in Shreveport recently a mile race was put on. Wade Kauff ran the distance around the Shreveport track in his baseball uniform in 6 minutes 26 seconds, a pace that probably could be beaten by a lot of well developed office boys.

LONG SEASON FOR THE COAST LEAGUE. THE Pacific Coast league baseball season began on April 4 and will end Oct. 29.

LOWDERMILK TOO OLD TO LEARN NEW TRICKS

IF Hughey Jennings is depending on Grover Lowdermilk to pull his club out of the championship fire he is flying in the face of Old Man Probability. Grover's great weakness is lack of control. When he swings his tremendous arm through the winding up arc Grover's eye is not on the plate. Nor yet is it on the batter.

It is not until just before the moment of delivery that Grover's optics focus on the few square inches of space through which his fast ball must cleave if he is to come through as per instructions from his boss.

Experts in pitching think this is the fault that has kept Grover from being one of the greatest mound men of all time.

It is contended that he ought to keep his eye on the objective from the start of his windup to the moment of delivery in order to gain the coveted "control."

The natural query is, "Why doesn't he reform his system?" And the only reply is that he can't. Grover is no spring chicken. He has been through the mill several years and is practically hopeless.

Branch Rickey was asked recently about Grover. Branch sold Lowdermilk for \$4,000 late last season to the Tigers. This is what he thought of the lanky one:

"Grover is institutionalized. I think he has passed the time when he can be instructed. He is hard working and conscientious, but he just can't change his old tricks. His pitching habits are permanently formed."

"I had this in mind when I let Lowdermilk go. What usefulness he had was waning, not coming. Furthermore, it was more or less a case of a choice between him and Koob. I saw a chance to develop Koob, none for Grover."

"For that reason I will be genuinely surprised if Jennings is able to improve Grover. I think his wildness is habitual. He may be useful to a heavy hitting club like Detroit, but that he will ever overcome his chief fault I find it hard to believe."

There is more of a possibility that Bill James will "return." When right James is good. He was a sick man last season. It appears and failed to repeat the splendid season he displayed for the Browns in 1914.

The Browns received for James something like \$11,000. The pick of a minor league club was also involved in the turn of events. The Browns needed money, so James was shipped away. If he should regain his health and pitch his best ball for Detroit, Jennings would be repaid several times over for his expenditure. The only thing that stood between the Tigers and the pennant last year appears to have been a lack of a first class veteran twirler or two.

Ball Players More Mannerly Now

Old time fans always will give one an argument as to whether baseball is any faster now than it was in the palmy days of "Pop" Anson and "King" Kelly.

The silver temple brigade finds it mighty hard to admit that Ty Cobb has anything on some of the stars of yesteryear and that Walter Johnson is harder to hit than Anson Ruse was before Anson tried to strike out John Barleycorn every evening after the game. But there is one point on which the veteran patrons and players concede something to the present generation. They admit that baseball manners off the field are better now than they were once.

There used to be a time when managers of first class hotels would have welcomed a proposition to house big league ball clubs just as much as they would have rejoiced in the chance to entertain a flock of plague patients. The very idea filled them with horror, for the players were likely to do almost anything, except burn the house down.

All of the old time ball players were not toughs. In fact, the large majority behaved as well as anybody could ask. But there was a fair percentage of fellows who never were intended for polite society. The "bad actors" were allowed about all the rope they cared to take, too, for the better element figured that every man's conduct was his own business.

Nowadays rowdiness off the field has virtually been eliminated. Now and then some individual kicks over the traces, but the spirit of the managers and clubs is against anything smacking of "rough stuff," and those who want to cut up seek some place where their boss and their comrades will not find them.

So at present the hotels of the best grade, instead of calling for the police when a major league club tries to register, hang out the welcome sign. Low Tuller, owner of a leading Detroit hotel, is one landlord who doesn't care how many ball clubs stop at his house. He had the White Sox as guests all last season and says that a better behaved body could not be recruited anywhere in the world.

"Prejudices against ball clubs are dying fast among hotel proprietors," said Mr. Tuller recently. "In fact, it is just about dead now. The members of the Chicago club, whom I entertained last year, compare favorably in deportment with anybody who comes here. In fact, you never would know that there was a baseball aggregation in the hotel, so quiet are the men. Lots of my guests never learn that they have been stopping under the same roof with Eddie

Collins and Joe Jackson except by accident.

"There is no class of patronage that

I rather would have than that of the league players, and just as many clubs can come here as we have room for."

Ty Cobb Out For Pilfering Record



Photo by American Press Association. TY COBB, the great Detroit outfielder, says he will attempt to establish a new record for base stealing this season.

How Sinclair Got Rid of His Players

HOW it was that Harry F. Sinclair obtained control of about thirty of the best players of the Federal league and was permitted to sell them to the highest bidders and pocket the proceeds is answered by one who knows in this way:

Sinclair purchased Lee Magee, Benny Kauff and several stars and others from the Brooklyn club late last season for the purpose of putting them in the lineup of the team which the Feds planned to put into New York and

which Sinclair was to back. When the Feds were eliminated from the base ball world Sinclair no longer had any place to play those Brookfield stars, and he did the only natural thing, sold them. Sinclair took the other players from the Kansas City, Buffalo and other clubs in payment for the money which he had loaned to those clubs during the season of 1915. Sinclair has kept silent as to how he actually came into ownership of those players, merely because he saw no reason to make

known that some of the clubs were in such shape that he had to loan them money out of his private account.

When peace was made in baseball it was found that Sinclair was about \$200,000 in the hole through advance of cash to clubs in the league. Sinclair was willing to wipe clean the slate and charge the \$200,000 to a recreation account, but the Sinclair debtors insisted that he take the pick of the players pointing out that in selling them he could reimburse himself.

PASSING OF THORPE AS BALL PLAYER

IN the matter of remodeling things and persons nearer to the heart's desire, some writers contend that Lo the poor Indian is stubborn folk. The ambitious potter who would contract to remodel Mr. Lo according to his own ideas of usefulness has a tough task.

Passing over many instances outside the sporting realm illustrating the point, we come to the case of John McGraw, potter extraordinary to the New York baseball club.

John J. bought a promising bit of material in James Thorpe, the Fox and Sac Indian, famed the world over for his unequalled prowess on athletic and football fields. In 1912 Thorpe had just proved himself the greatest all around physical star in a test against all the best at Stockholm.

John, after laying down the price of an imported six cylinder car plus a year's gasoline supply for his wonderful assemblage of co-ordinating atoms, thought that, with a master's pat here and a touch there, he could convert this splendid runner, jumper, hurdler and weight man into the greatest baseball player the world ever knew.

So confident was McGraw that, in addition to the purchase price, he agreed to pay Mr. Lo J. Thorpe a princely number of bucks per annum for six seasons, to wit three years—time enough to make over the map of Europe or run down Villa.

But it was not time enough for remodeling Jim Thorpe. The figures indicate that the task is all but impossible. While improvement was shown, it was slight, not at all in proportion to the labor and money expended. Here are the figures on Thorpe's big league work in three seasons:

Year	G.	Ab.	R.	H.	Sh.	Av.
1915	11	32	3	12	4	231
1916	30	31	6	2	1	104
1917	10	35	6	3	1	112

This is a three year batting average of .193, or less than is expected of a great many pitchers.

In the three years Thorpe scored nineteen runs, each of which cost the New York club approximately \$1,000, counting salary, bonus and money spent in training.

Thorpe showed a great dash in the spring season, but McGraw decided to send him to the minors.

The failure cannot be ascribed to McGraw's ineptitude in fashioning the finished article from the raw material. He has been time tried and proved at that part of the game.

OFFERS CITY GOLF TRACT.

A LAND company in Portland, Ore., has offered a 150-acre tract of ground to the city for an eighteen-hole golf course on condition that the city shall pay taxes on the land for the fifteen years.

FEW BASEBALL FANS KNOW SIZE OF THE DIAMOND

HOW many baseball fans if asked the distance between the home plate and first base or between any other bases would give any other answer than ninety feet? Probably none; yet this is all wrong. The various distances are:

- Home plate to first base, 87 feet 9 inches.
- First base to second base, 88 feet 1½ inches.
- Second base to third base, 88 feet 1½ inches.
- Third base to home plate, 87 feet 9 inches.
- Home plate to pitcher's box, 59 feet 1 inch.

There are many other figures connected with the construction of a diamond of which fans most commonly are in error.

So widespread is this error that only recently dispatches carried the news that Secretary Heydler had ordered the National league diamonds reconstructed because of faulty measurements. Thus even the ground keepers made mistakes.

Their errors were confined to the methods of locating the pitcher's plate and varied as much as eighteen inches from the proper distance. In many cases, however, the variation was only an inch.

The ground keepers—some of them—made the mistake of supposing that 90 feet meant 90 feet 6 inches. It is actually 90 feet 6 inches. Some ground keepers measured this distance from the front of the plate, others from its center, and still others from the rear corner, where the intersection of the lines of the diamond is to be found.

The last is correct. As the depth of the plate from front to back is seventeen inches, the variation is considerable. In the case of the maximum mistake in regard to the pitching distance—eighteen inches—it is enough to completely ruin the effect of the "break" used by the hurler under normal conditions. The change also affects the batsman.

The base line distances are almost of equal importance, but a few errors are made here by ground keepers.

First and third base should have their entire extent within the intersection lines of the diamond, while second base should be so placed that only one-fourth of its extent is within the intersecting lines, which meet at exactly the center of the bag.

sents the combined width of home plate and the first cushion, each cushion being fifteen inches, according to regulation, while twelve inches of home plate touches the boundary line of the diamond.

Once on first base, the runner would have to take a lead of twenty-two and one-half inches more than the normal

one in order to steal second with the same effort if the bases were all placed outside the diamond, making it necessary to run ninety feet.

These are trifles, but the manager who is looking for the "percentage"—leaguers like Stallings, Jones and others—will watch even such details as these.

Cravath Wants Home Run Mark

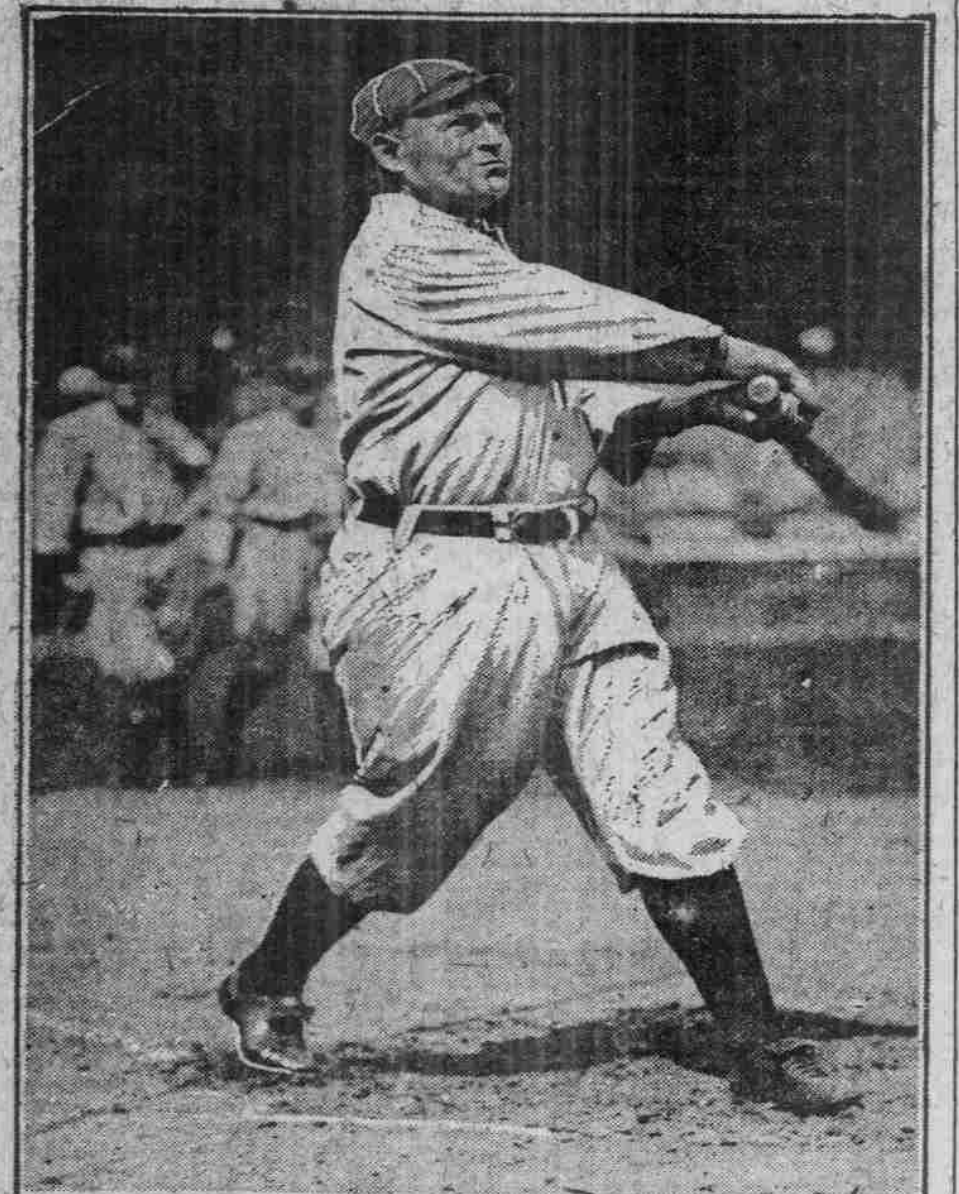


Photo by American Press Association. GABBY CRAVATH, the Philadelphia National's sturdy outfielder, is out to establish a home run record this season. Last year he made twenty-four.